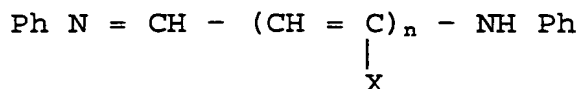


ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A process for preparing an asymmetrical indocyanine dye comprising the steps of:

- a) reacting a first quaternised indolenine or substituted indolenine with a compound of the formula (II)



or hydrochloride thereof,

wherein n is 0 or 1

Ph is phenyl or substituted phenyl

X is hydrogen, halogen or alkyl, preferably chlorine, in a solvent selected from the group consisting of acetic acid, acetic anhydride and mixtures thereof in the presence of acetyl chloride, to obtain an intermediate hemicyanine, and

- b) further reacting said intermediate hemicyanine with a second quaternised indolenine or substituted indolenine different from said first indolenine.